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ROUND TABLE—DISCUSSION

Should Text Books Provide Historical Notes? I think historical material can be used to good advantage. They do not have to be the notes found in our text books, neither does such historical material need to come at the time when such notes occur in the text books. At the same time I find that some of the notes in our books are very timely. The students read many of them with interest.

From discussions in classes I would conclude that most students think of mathematics in some such terms as, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be." Some have told me that they thought that mathematics had its day; that all we did was to keep it as nearly alive as we can. Discussions in the class will evoke correlations from the history, or story of mathematics, if you please. The teacher should be alert to take hold of such opportunities. Better than formal talks on the history, are short allusions made psychologically. I refer particularly to elementary mathematics classes.

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Some Qualifications for Junior High School Teachers of Mathematics. The teachers of mathematics in the junior high schools cannot be the grade teachers as such without additional training. Even less can such teachers be those who lack adaptibility and have received their training in a university only, where they have very likely acquired the methods of their professors. Such teachers, especially if thy have never taught before, are likely to be teachers of subjects, not of pupils. However necessary a good training is for successful teaching, we must nevertheless not forget that training does not necessarily assure us of ability to teach. While the work of the grade teacher is to a great extent drill work, and that of the high school teacher of a more specialized nature, the work of the junior high school teacher stands out as unique, especially that of the second and third year's work. The psychology of the situation is important. Instead of seeing principally the subject matter, the teacher should be able to see in his mind's eye the whole community before him, see the homes from which the pupils come, see th different occupations which the parents follow, and see the different lines of work or vocations in which the pupils are interested. He should acquaint himself with at least some of the mathematics of these vocations. With this situation before him, he cannot help but make mathematics real and vital to the students. We frequently say that the teacher should, during this unique period, give the student a glimpse of what mathematics really is, give him a little touch of the different studies in high school mathematics. If the work is handled as I have outlined above and as I shall further comment, such a glimpse into more scientific mathematics will be quite natural.

High school teachers who have taught in the grades, ought to be promising candidates, for the work in the grades should have made them more sympathetic. It seems that teachers who have taught in the grades are more desirable than teachers who have taught only in high schools. I mean grade teachers who are students, who are eager for self-improvement, ever willing to widen their knowledge and broaden their horizon. Such teachers should have had four years of mathematics beyond the grades as a minimum. Taking for granted, that the head of the mathematics department understands the mission of the junior high school; that he has recently taught, or that he is teaching a class in the first year of high school mathematics, so that he sees clearly the weaknesses and problems in this year's work; he can, in my opinion, meet the emergency quite well until training schools train teachers for this work. If he has taught also in the upper grades so that these problems are not new to him, and if his training in education functions in his work, he is, in my opinion, ideally fitted to cope with the situation. He should give a short series or course of lectures to the prospective or entering teachers. Suggestive topics for such course would be, the significance and aim of junior high school mathematics, importance of the equation ,the formula, the relation of the equation to the graph, the importance of the graph with numerous illustrations, and others. When the teachers are thus filled with the subject, they can be of some inspiration to the pupils. It is needless to say that the head of the deparment should keep in close and sympathetic touch with the work as it progresses.

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